

americangirl.com

March/April 2008

American Girl

26 ways
you can help
the **Earth**

* **Make** cute
animal **crafts**

* Silly **fun** for
April Fools' Day

Plus!
How to
get your
clutter under
control!

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See AG Online!

Visit americangirl.com to peek behind the scenes of AG magazine!

Always get a parent's permission before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.



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Mix up a batch of crafty creatures.

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Alex's Story

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Follow Your Inner Star™



Looking Good!

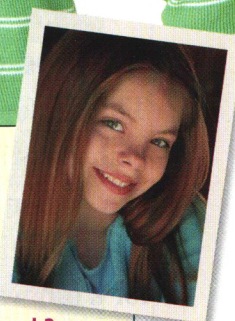
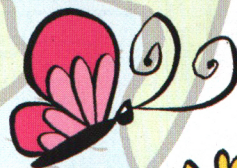
Take a peek at everything you need to know about getting glasses.

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Earth Day Challenge

See what YOU can do to help the Earth.

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About the Cover

Meet Paris Rose Y., age 12.

We asked her about spring.

What do you do for spring break?

My friends and I have a bunch of sleepovers in a row that week.

We have a scary movie marathon.

What's your best spring cleaning tip?

My room is messy, but I always put my favorite CD on when I clean it.

When I'm singing, I don't notice the work.

Paris Rose Y.

For more about this issue, go to "Behind the Scenes" on page 49.



Making Memories

I loved making the memory books in the November/December 2007 issue. I made 13 memory books in just one day! I gave them to my sister, my mom, and my best friend, and I still have another 10 that I'm working on!

Michaela L.
Age 11, Montana



Hooked on Books

Thanks for the awesome book-club ideas in the November/December issue. I'm a total book fanatic, and I was looking for a fun way to find out about different and new books. My friends are really excited about our first meeting!

Grace L. :-)

Dancing Queen

Thank you so much for the article about Latin dance in the November/December issue. I have been doing Latin dance for almost a year, and I love to salsa! I am happy that other kids are getting the opportunity to love it, too.

Isabel T. :-)



Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

American Girl magazine

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

You can also send letters via e-mail to
readermail@americangirl.com.

Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't print every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Win It!

On page 19, you'll read about our latest Win It! contest. To enter, send a postcard by April 15 with your first and last name and address to:

Win It!—M/A 08
American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Official Rules

1. Employees of American Girl and its affiliates and their families are not eligible.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by April 15, 2008. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed. **A parent or guardian must sign the entry.**
4. One winner will be chosen at random.
5. All entries become the property of American Girl and will not be returned.
6. Void where prohibited by law.



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Girls

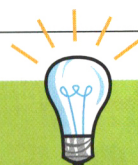
E X P R E S S

Snack Sack

Take your lunch to school in style. In honor of Earth Day, decorate a plain fabric tote bag with fabric-paint markers, fabric paint, or fine-tipped permanent markers. Draw your favorite doodles, such as stars, hearts, or flowers—or ask all of your friends to sign your bag. Let the bag dry overnight, and then use it to take your lunch—in reusable containers, of course—to school every day.



Design your tote bag online! Visit americangirl.com and click on "Fun for Girls."



Did You Know?

You'll flip for these fun facts!

Green Scene

It takes about 1,000 years for a plastic bag to decompose. Paper bags break down in just one month. But the best way to be friendly to the Earth is to avoid creating any garbage at all. Earth Day is April 22—how will you celebrate? For ideas, turn to page 24.

Buzzword foibles



How to say it: FOY-bulls

What it means: minor flaws or peculiar behaviors

One way to use it: Caitie's habit of playing with her gum was one of her foibles.



The buzzword is tucked into this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it? The answer is on page 44.

Find It!



Look for fun facts sprinkled throughout the magazine!

True Story

That brownish stone wasn't really a diamond—or was it?

Dear American Girl,

During spring break last year, my twin brother and I shoveled and sifted dirt at the Crater of Diamonds State Park in Arkansas. It's the only public diamond site in the world where you can dig for diamonds and other stones such as jasper, quartz, and mica. You won't believe it, but what we thought was a piece of mica turned out to be a champagne-colored diamond! We made a lot of noise when the ranger told us. The diamond weighs 2.5 carats—that means it's big!

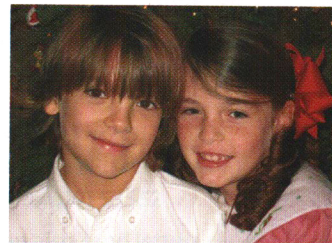
We decided to name the diamond after ourselves and to loan it to a natural science museum, where the diamond is displayed in the hall of gems and minerals. The museum held a big ceremony for us when we delivered our diamond. So many people wanted to take our picture that I felt like a celebrity. Everyone keeps asking me how much the diamond is worth, but to me, it's priceless!

Sincerely,
Grace D.
Age 9, Texas



Park officials put the diamond next to a quarter for comparison.

Diamond photo: Arkansas State Parks



Grace and her twin brother, Garrett

Gymnastics

Vault is fun

All you have to do is run

Beam is O.K.

But it never goes my way

I love the floor

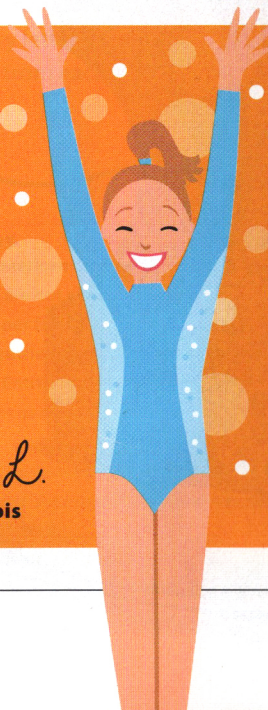
It's excitement galore

We love doing bars

'Cause we all feel like stars



Julia L.
Age 10, Illinois



Lunch Box

Buns aren't just for hot dogs anymore! Try these fun bun sandwiches.

Honey Bunny



Peanut Butter + Honey + Bun

Hammy Sammy



Ham + American Cheese + Bun

Pizza, Pizza



Pizza Sauce + String Cheese + Bun

Tip: For a fun twist on your favorite sandwich, try using a hot-dog bun instead of regular sliced bread.

Wheel Lucky

It was a beautiful day, and Mary Z. was enjoying her bike ride. "I was coming down a hill at top speed. I whizzed into the park, and there was a park bench right in my path! I was going too fast to stop. When I hit the bench, my front wheel stuck, and I flew over the handlebars and the park bench. I landed hard on the other side."

Mary, age 12, was wearing a helmet. She was lucky that she wasn't hurt badly, but the Virginia girl's bike was wrecked. Here's some advice to help you stay safe on your bike:

*** Click It.** You've got to wear a helmet—even for a short ride. Always fasten the straps, and make sure they're snug enough to keep the helmet from moving around on your head. If you do fall and hit your helmet in any way, get a new one.

*** Check It.** Your bike should be in good condition before you ride. Ask an adult to make sure that your bike's handlebars, seat, and wheels are attached tightly and that your tires are properly inflated.

*** Watch It.** Follow road rules, and keep your eyes open for dangers that can cause a bike crash—wet leaves, storm grates, loose gravel or rocks, and park benches.



Cut out card. Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

In our September/October issue, we asked you where you'd like to sing. Here's what you said:

Karaoke party—231

TV talent contest—130

Huge stadium—75

School assembly—70



Next question:

Which of these shoes is your favorite? Circle your choice.



Cut out your answer and mail it to the address on page 2.



Key Charm

Use **craft glue** to attach **rhinestones** to an unused **key**. Add **stickers** or **glitter glue** to the key. Let dry. Hang on a short **ribbon**.



Photos: Salisbury Studios

Help Wanted!

Have you rafted in a whitewater river, climbed a steep mountain, or hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon? Tell us about your most exciting outdoor adventure. Was it fun, exciting, or a little overwhelming? Describe where you went, what you did, and what you saw along the way. Send your story, along with your address, birth date, and a photo of yourself on your adventure, to the address on page 2.

A+ Test Tips

You won't need to carry a lucky charm on test day if you try these tips for making your own luck in school.

Breathe In

Studies have shown that scent can bring back some memories instantly. Wear a scented lotion while you study, and then apply the same lotion before a test to help you remember the facts. Try a peppermint or citrus scent—those smells can make you feel more alert, too.



Cool Down and Fuel Up

Make sure that you're not up studying late the night before a test. Before bed, de-stress by bending forward at the waist and letting your arms and head hang toward the floor. Take five deep breaths and let them out slowly as you relax your back. Follow your good night's sleep with an unrushed breakfast that includes protein—yogurt, sausage, or even a slice of pizza.



Count It Off

If you need to remember a list of facts, try tapping a finger or foot while you memorize them—one tap for each fact. Then do the action during the test to jog your brain. If you need to remember the names of the three branches of government, do one tap for each name as you study, and then tap it out on test day. (Just remember not to disturb your neighbors!)



We'd wish you luck on your test, but now you won't need it!

Shining Star

Ellen B. and her friends got to talking when they learned of their beloved school custodian's lifelong dream. "We read in our school paper that Mr. Venable has nine kids and a dog named Blackie, and that he has always dreamed of visiting the Golden Gate Bridge," Ellen remembers.

The North Carolina girls decided to try to make Mr. Venable's dream come true. Ellen, age 11, wrote to the school superintendent, asking if she and her friends could raise money to send their hardworking custodian and his

wife on a trip to San Francisco, California, to see the Golden Gate Bridge. Permission granted, the girls worked with their parents, teachers, and churches to raise about \$2,000.

The school principal helped to make reservations for the airplane and hotel, and Mr. Venable had tears in his eyes when he was presented with the tickets at a school assembly. "I'm so proud to have helped make Mr. Venable's wish come true," said Ellen. "He was touched that we cared about him."



You can shine, too.

Ask the people in your life about their biggest dreams—your dad, your grandma, your piano teacher. Who knows? Maybe someday you can help make one of those dreams come true.



AG Art Gallery

These reader photos prove that the world is a beautiful place.



Julia B.
Age 13, Illinois



Felice T.
Age 12, Illinois



Jennifer S.
Age 11, Washington



Send prints of your prettiest or most interesting photos to the address on page 2. Sorry, entries can't be returned. ★



Dream Machines

Have you ever wished for more than snacks and soda to come out of a vending machine? Look what these readers dreamed up instead!

Lollipop Shop

"These lollipops come in many flavors, and people of all ages enjoy them."



Lindsay C.
Age 14, California

Sleepover Stuff

"Nail polish, stylish pajamas, yummy popcorn—a fun-filled sleepover is guaranteed."



Katherine S.
Age 11, Virginia

Needs for Steeds

"If you forget a brush or other riding supplies, this machine solves the problem."



Abigail O.
Age 12, Minnesota

Petal Pusher

"Get fresh flowers whenever you want."



Claire P.
Age 13, Czech Republic



Gift Gizmo

"This machine is perfect if you need a gift fast."



Treshlyn S.
Age 14, Texas

Marine Machine

"You wouldn't need to run to the pet shop—you could just go to this machine."



Jackie S.
Age 11, Illinois

School Supplier

"If schools had this, kids wouldn't be unprepared for class anymore."



Gabriella T.
Age 13, New Jersey

Green Gadget

"This machine sells organic foods and energy-saving household items."



Alexa E.
Age 11, Pennsylvania



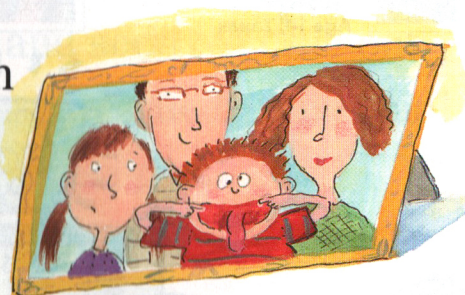
New Contest: One-of-a-Kind Halloween Costumes

Witch, ghost, princess—some costumes you just see over and over again every Halloween. Can you think of a totally unique, never-before-seen Halloween costume? Picture yourself as the only trick-or-treater dressed as a gumball machine, a famous work of art, or a zebra with rainbow

stripes—the possibilities are endless! Send a drawing of yourself in your costume to the address on page 2, along with your first and last name, address, birth date, and school photo. Deadline: April 10, 2008. Winners will appear in the September/October 2008 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.

"Oh, Brother!"

You love your family, but sometimes they can be so embarrassing! Here, girls share silly stories and their families' funny foibles.



At my birthday party, my younger sister sang all the embarrassing songs I've made up that were meant to be kept secret, and all my friends

laughed. My sister can be annoying sometimes, but I still love her.

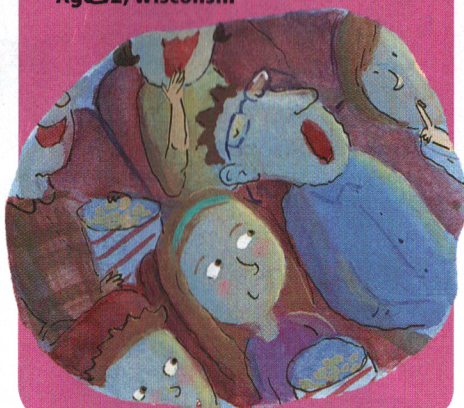
Mary C.
Age 14, Germany



One time, my family and I went to a movie,

but my dad thought it was boring. He fell asleep and started snoring! The people behind us were laughing. At first, I was really embarrassed, but then I realized that I didn't even know the people behind us, so it wasn't like they were going to tease me for the rest of my life. So, I just ignored it.

Megan L.
Age 12, Wisconsin



At a family friend's house, my family and I

were playing Twister. After finishing, we wanted to see who was the most flexible. When it was my brother's turn, he put his toes in his mouth! I started laughing—and blushing, too!

Sarah H.
Age 12, Oregon



At Disney World, my dad and I went to see

a parade. When the music started, he began to sing and dance. I said, "Dad, stop!" Everyone was staring at us. But hey, that's my dad, and I love him!

Cassie A.
Age 12, Michigan



I went shopping with my aunt, and she said, "Ashley, do you have any underwear?" I was in shock! But after a couple of minutes, I was fine and thought that it really wasn't that bad.

Ashley U.
Age 12, Oregon



In dance class, I had just started to make friends.

When my grandma came to pick me up, she kissed me and said, "How is my lovey?" My new friends just stared. My grandma said that my friends would still like me. She was right!

Wynter H.
Age 10, Minnesota



Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Feeling left

out. Have you ever been the only girl in your class who wasn't invited to a party or a sleepover? Or maybe your friends didn't save a seat for you at lunch. Were you sad? Angry? How did you make yourself feel better?

Send your answers, first and last name, address, birth date, and school photo to the address on page 2. Deadline: April 10, 2008. Some answers will appear in the September/October 2008 issue. ★

Big Truth
Funny moments
bring families
closer together.



My family was at a hotel, and during breakfast, my dad burnt some bacon in the microwave. The smoke alarm went off, and the fire department came! My family was embarrassed, but now we laugh about it.

Jenny W.
Age 12, Michigan



I can take my front teeth and pull them over my lip to look like a rabbit. My mom took my picture like that with bunny ears and carrots. For my birthday, she put it up in my classroom! I got over it—eventually.

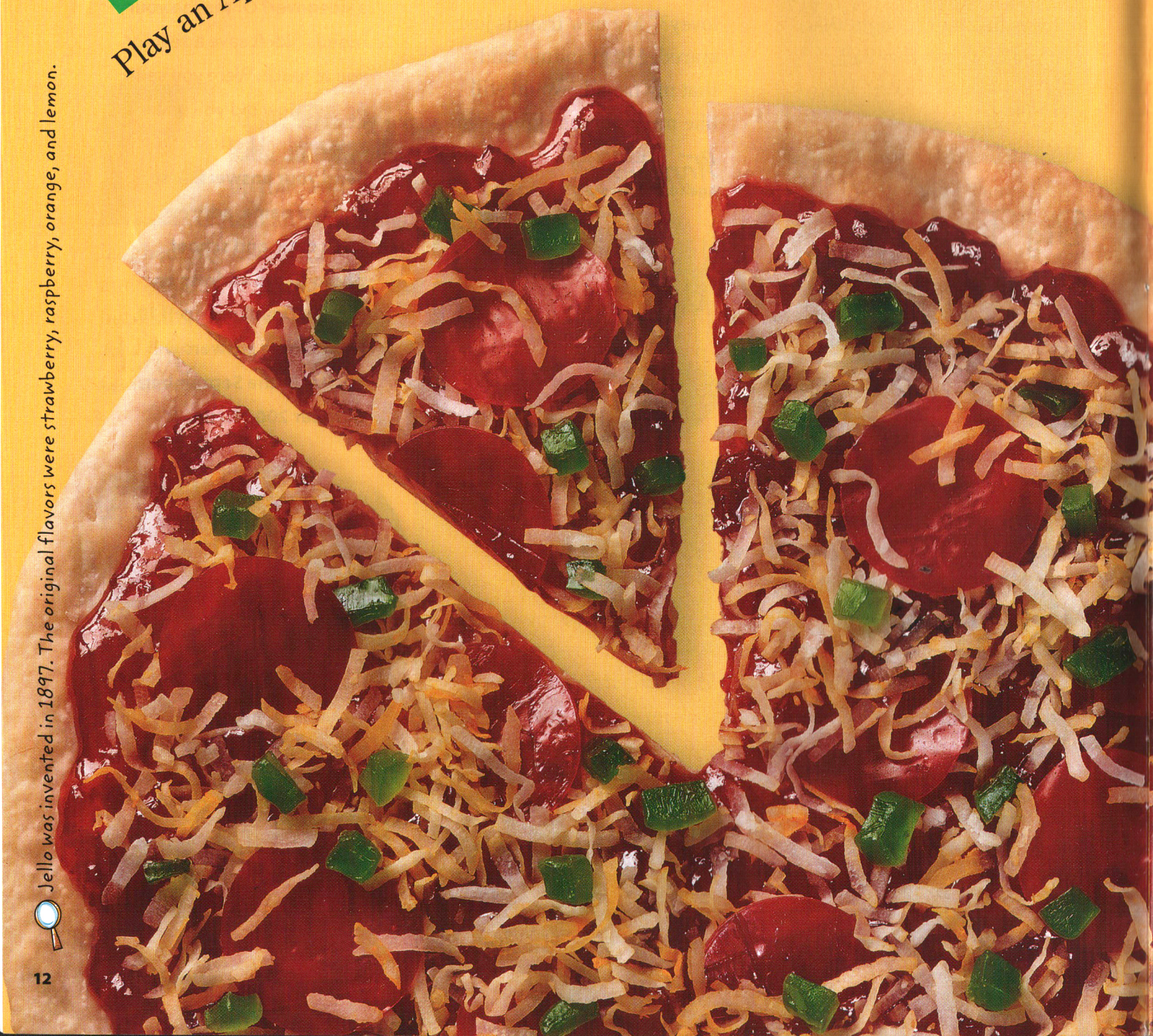
Hannah W.
Age 10, New York



Foolish Food

Play an April Fools' joke on your family by serving these funny foods!

Jello was invented in 1897. The original flavors were strawberry, raspberry, orange, and lemon.





Jiggly "Juice"

You'll need a spoon for this deceptive drink!



You will need:

An adult to help you

- * 1 box (3 ounces) red Jell-O
- * 2 clear plastic cups (10-ounce size or larger)
- * 2 straws



Ask an adult to prepare Jell-O following directions on the box and to pour liquid Jell-O into cups. Stick a straw in each cup, and place cups in refrigerator to set overnight.

"Pizza" Pie

This pizza is actually a sweet treat!



You will need:

An adult to help you

- * 1 box piecrust mix
- * 1 box Dots candies
- * 1 red Fruit Roll-Ups sheet
- * ½ cup shredded coconut
- * Yellow food coloring
- * 1 small jar cherry jelly



1. Make piecrust dough according to directions on package. Flatten dough into a thin circle and place on a baking sheet. Ask an adult to bake crust following directions on package. Let cool.

2. Use a butter knife to cut green Dots into pieces. Wash a pair of scissors and cut Fruit Roll-Ups sheet into circles. Put coconut in a ziplock bag, add a drop of food coloring, close, and shake.

3. Spread jelly on crust. Sprinkle on coconut and candy pieces. Place Fruit Roll-Ups circles on top. Cut into wedges and serve immediately. ★



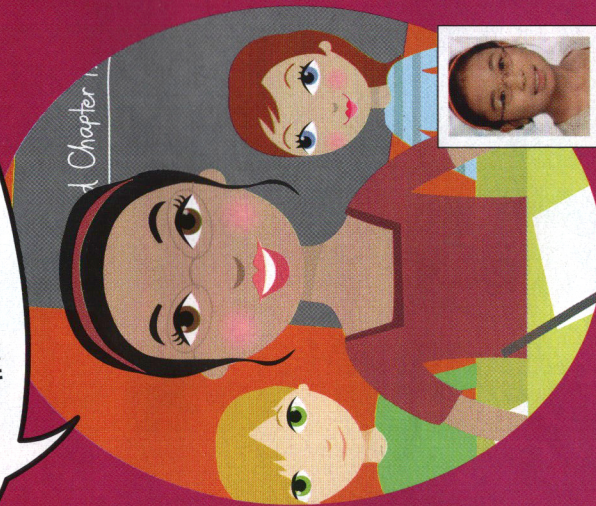
Looking Good!

Are you getting glasses, or are they already part of your life? Readers share their best advice on girls' biggest glasses worries.

Worry:

People will make fun of me.

When I went to school with my glasses on, I didn't worry about them. Since I didn't worry or make them a big deal, nobody acted as if I had glasses at all.



Rosie D.
Age 11, Maryland

Worry:

Glasses will cause problems with the sports I play.

You can buy a special strap that hooks onto your glasses and keeps them from falling off while you play.

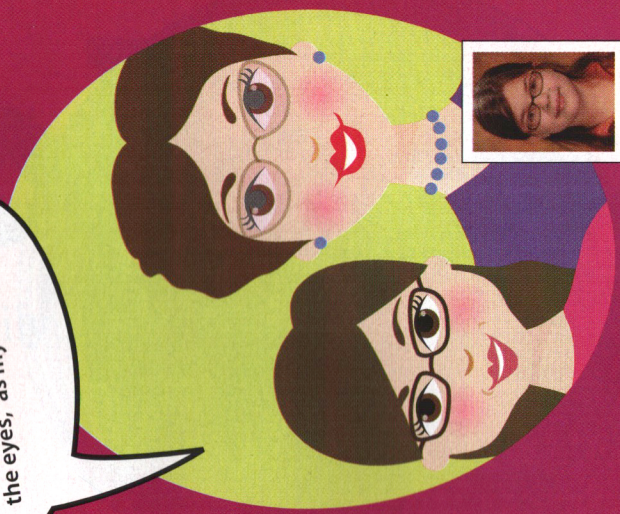


Jenny M.
Age 11, Minnesota

Worry:

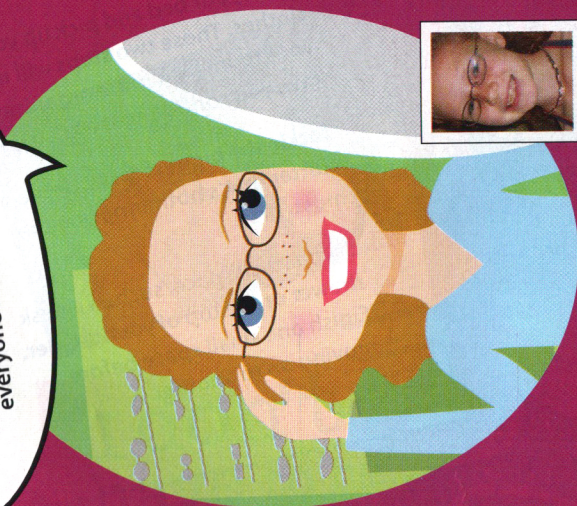
I'll look strange in glasses.

Glasses are 'jewelry for the eyes,' as my mom says.



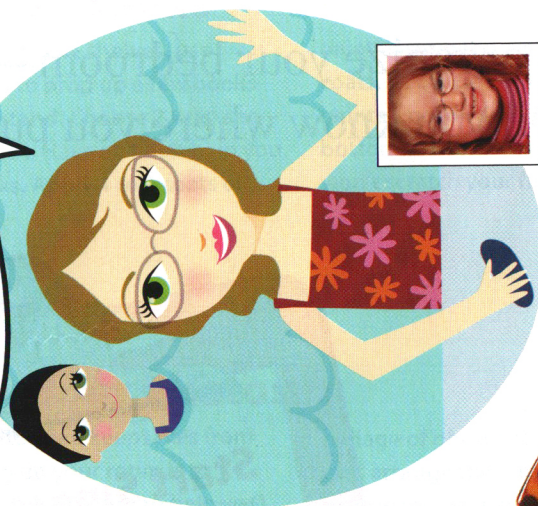
Olivia R.
Age 12, Missouri

I was nervous, too. But picking out frames was fun, and when I walked into my classroom, everyone loved them.



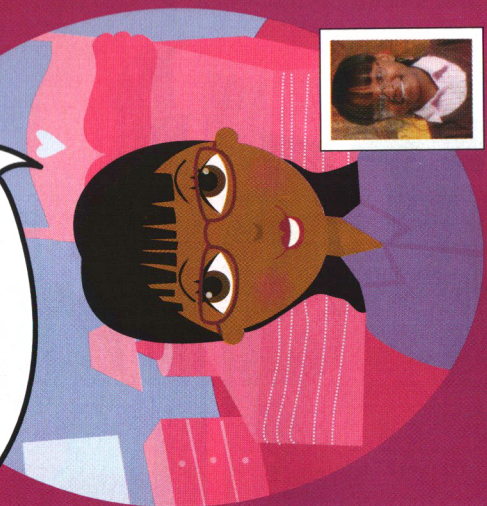
Madeline B.
Age 9, Georgia

If you're going swimming, remember to bring along a glasses case so that your glasses will stay safe while you're in the water.



Alexandra S.
Age 10, Kansas

If you pick glasses to fit your personality, you'll like them. I used to have tomboyish glasses, but now I'm excited about my new hot-pink frames. Don't hide—show the world what you're made of!



Kaci M.
Age 9, Alabama

Glasses Case



Katelyn D., age 12, came up with this fun and easy craft to help protect her glasses. Make a furry container that you can use to stash your specs.

1. Cut a strip of colorful fabric and a strip of faux fur to fit around the outside of a clean peanuts can with a smooth edge.
2. Use craft glue to attach fabric to the outside of the can and faux fur to the inside of the can. Let dry.
3. Make a trim for the top of the can by cutting a strip of faux fur. Put craft glue on the back of the fur and then fold it over the edge of the can. Let dry.



Keep this handy container next to your bed to protect your glasses at night—and to help you find them in the morning!

Are You Ready for Contacts?

Think you're ready for contact lenses? Then ask yourself these questions:

- * Do my glasses cause major problems in sports or other activities that I do?
- * Am I really O.K. with the idea of touching my eye with my finger?
- * Am I responsible? Do I brush and floss my teeth without being reminded?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you might be ready for contacts. Talk to your parents and your eye doctor about the idea. ★

Clutter Control

Use these tips and crafts to organize your bedroom—you'll be able to find things if you know where you put them!




Start Smart

Start Smart
Don't try to sort your entire bedroom all at once. Start with some of these strategies.

- * Make your bed and pick up your clothes. Those two steps will make your room look more organized and give you confidence to keep going.
- * Tackle the biggest mess, or the clutter that's bothering you the most, first.
- * Sort a small space, such as a desk drawer or the top of your dresser. Finish one small space before moving on to another.




Tidy Your Books

 If you don't have shelves, use bookends to prop up a few books on your nightstand. Choose 2 bricks to use as bookends. Have an adult help you paint the bricks. Apply 1 to 2 coats of

paint, letting the paint dry between coats. Decorate with felt shapes or painted polka-dots. Glue felt to the bottom of the bricks so that they won't scratch your furniture.


Display Your Photos

 One way to keep keepsakes from cluttering up your room is to display them! Ask an adult to help you find a sheet of acrylic plastic (found at home improvement stores) that fits the top of your desk or dresser. Tape a

collage of photos to patterned paper, and arrange the paper on your desk or dresser top. Lay the plastic over the pictures for a pretty and practical display.



Hang Your Necklaces

 Tidy up a messy drawer with a helpful hanger. Ask an adult to help you hang a coatrack on your wall. Dangle necklaces and bracelets from the hooks.



Find Your Papers

Store paper in a creative place, like a mailbox. Decorate the box with bright magnets. Put up the red flag when the box holds something special, such as a letter from a relative that you want to answer.



We challenged three AG readers to organize their bedrooms.
Here are their photos of their room makeovers:



Abigale N., age 11,
from Indiana organized
the books and papers on her
dresser with a pretty mailbox and
new bookends she made herself.
Cleaning up her dresser and
stuffed animals made
a big difference!



Before



After



Twelve-year-old
Laura B. from Colorado
organized her desk and
displayed her photos. She even
displayed her love of volleyball
by adding paper volleyballs
to her new brick
bookends.



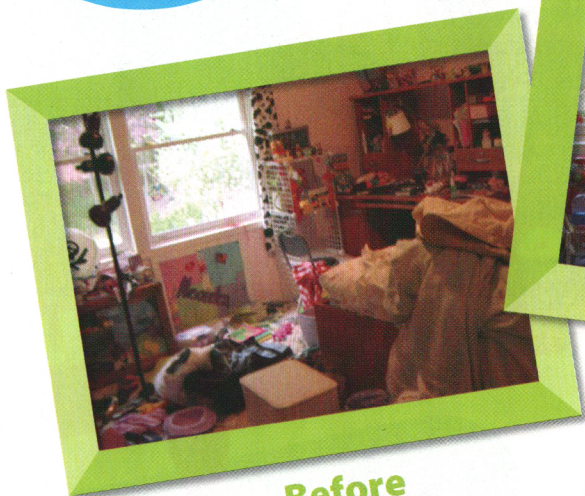
Before



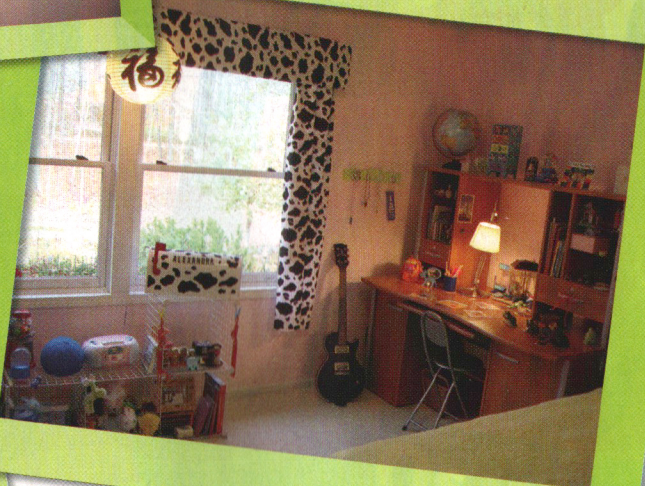
After



Alexandra C., age 10, from Michigan, showed us her new tidy room. She made a big difference by making her bed, putting away her clothes, and organizing her necklaces on a cute coatrack.



Before



After



BIG Truth

The time you spend clearing out the clutter will save you oodles of time later on. That means more time for the important stuff—**homework, friends, family, and fun.** Be smart about how you fill your space and your time.

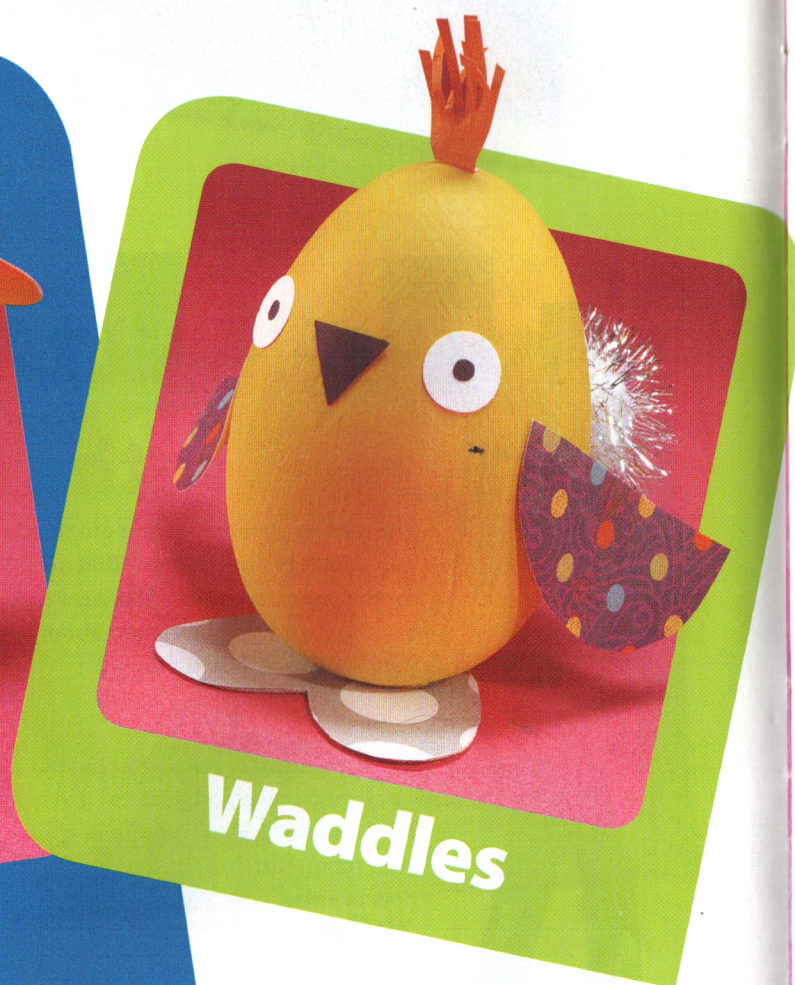
We're giving away ten *Clutter Control* books and one grand prize—a box of craft supplies to help you organize your room! Turn to page 2 to find out how to enter.

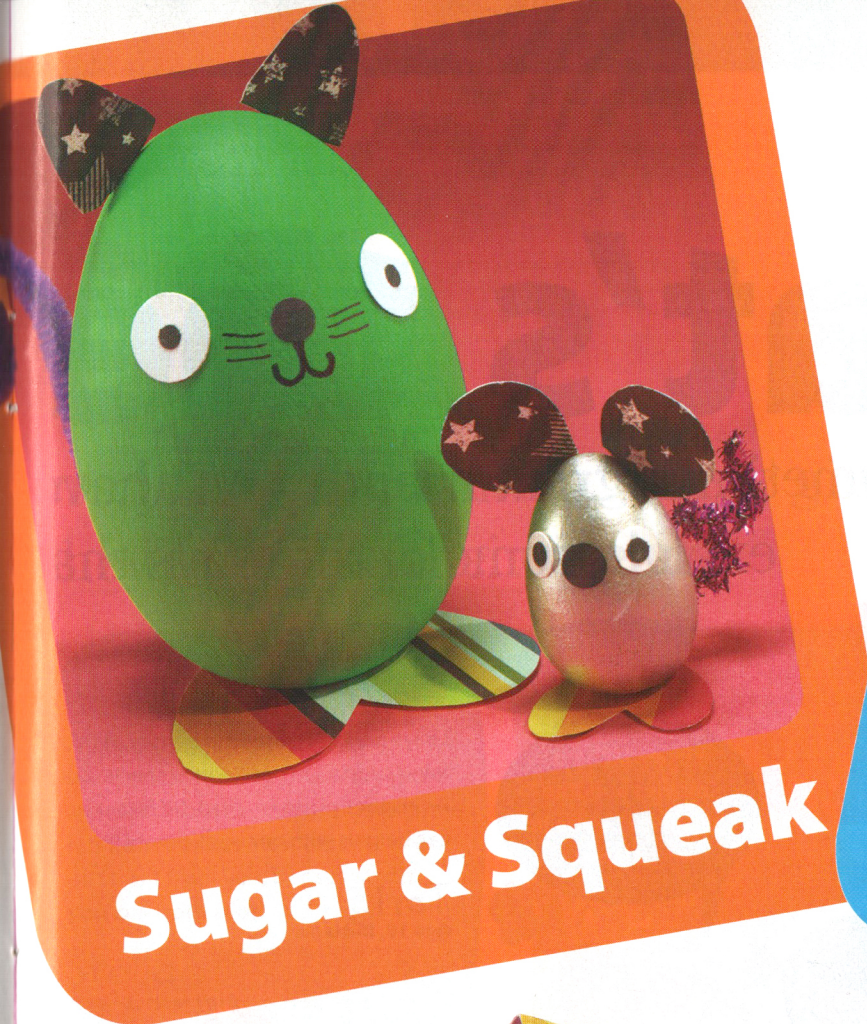


There are more tips on how to organize your bedroom, backpack, locker, and life in *Clutter Control*, available in bookstores. ★

Turn wooden eggs into
kooky creatures.

Scrambled Eggs





Sugar & Squeak



Oscar



Buttercup

YOU WILL NEED

- * Wooden egg
- * Acrylic paint
- * Paintbrush
- * White and patterned paper
- * Circle hole punch
- * Fine-tipped black permanent marker
- * Craft glue
- * Scissors
- * Pom-pom or chenille stem
- * Glue Dots

Here's how:

To create any of the animals, follow these directions. Paint the egg and let dry. For eyes, punch two circles from white paper. Draw a black dot in the middle of each circle and glue the circles onto the egg. Draw a mouth and nose on the egg. To finish, cut ears and feet from paper. Glue the paper to the egg. Let dry. If your animal needs a tail, attach a pom-pom or chenille stem with Glue Dots. Now give your new creature an egg-celent name! ★

What's the

Sometimes great friends don't have
explain some of the ways that

Funky Fun

"I have a friend who likes to wear funky clothes. I like to wear clothes that match perfectly. When we go shopping, we recommend different things to each other that neither of us would ever have tried on our own."

Caitlin
Age 13, Ohio



I like seeing
movies at the theater
because they look great
on the big screen.

I like watching
movies at home
because I can be in
my pajamas!



Agreeing to Disagree

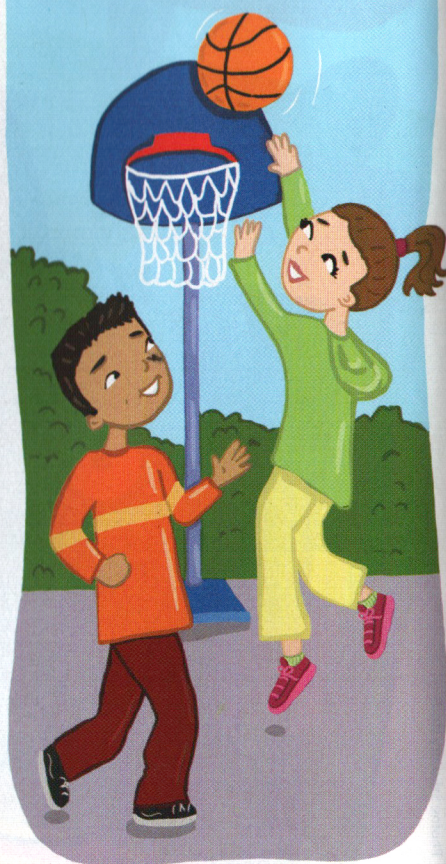
"My best friend is the opposite of me, except for one thing—we both love to talk! We spend all of our time together discussing and arguing about everything in the world. We never get mad at each other—for long! Just because we have different opinions doesn't mean we can't have fun together."

Alissabeth
Age 13, California

Boy, Oh, Boy!

"I have a good friend who is a boy. He loves sports. I'm not good at sports, but he inspires me to try hard. Differences can help us with our weak points."

Tori
Age 10, Indiana



Difference?

everything in common. These girls they're unlike their friends.

A World of Friendship

"I have a good friend who is from India. I love our friendship because I get to learn all about her culture. Sometimes it is better to have friends who are different from you, because then you can learn a lot."

Stella

Age 12, New York



Mix and Match

"I think that differences in a friendship are great! You might not have the same interests as your friend, but you can always try something new. My friend is into cheerleading. I like to dance. We make up cheerleading dances that we both can do."

Nicole

Age 12, New Jersey

Similarities can bring friends together, but it's the differences that make friendships interesting.

Keep an open mind about who might be fun to get to know. New friends could be all around you! ★



Earth Day Challenge

Why wait for **April 22nd** when Earth Day can be every day?

AG challenges you to **"be green"** and help the environment in **one way every** day. You can find great ideas on the back of the stickers.

Each day that you **complete** a challenge, place a **sticker**

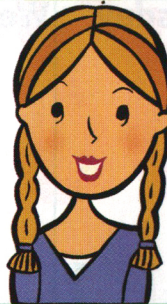
on the calendar. Use the rest of the stickers to remind yourself

to be **friendly to the Earth.**



March

Make Every Day Earth Day!



Saturday

1

Sunday

Monday

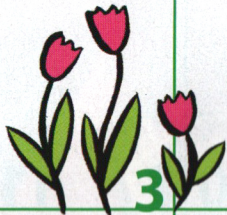
Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

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31

Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your calendar.



Make Every Day Earth Day!

April



Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

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Sunday

Monday

6

7

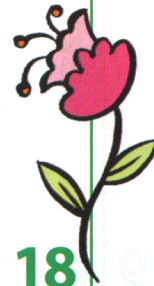
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Alex's Story

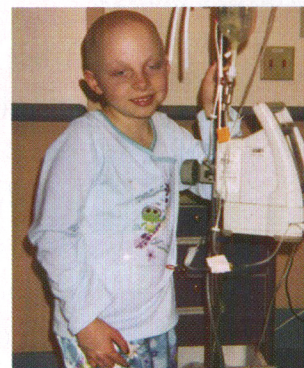


When Alex learned that she had cancer, her world turned upside down. Now she explains how she fought the disease—and beat it.



If you were to meet me today, you might not know that anything had happened. I have a really normal life. I go to school, hang out with my friends, swim, do stuff at church, and take dance classes. You probably would be surprised to hear that I'm a cancer survivor, but it's true.

After almost a year of hospital visits and treatments, I beat cancer, and I've been cancer-free for three years now. People sometimes treat me like I'm some kind of hero for beating cancer, but I don't think it's a huge deal. It's just something I did and something that's a part of who I am. Here's what happened.



I felt awful in the hospital, and I hated being bald, too.



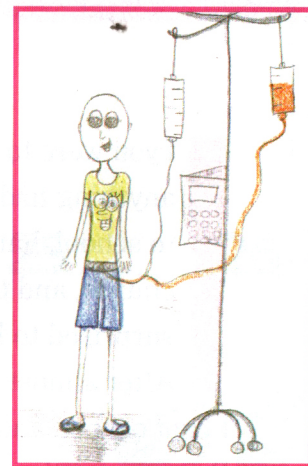
"Some people might be excited to stop going to school, but you don't appreciate it until you can't go anymore."

My family and I were visiting my grandparents in Scotland four Christmases ago. I fell down while we were out bowling and hurt my arm. Anybody else probably would have just gotten up and been fine (well, maybe she'd have been a little bit embarrassed, but otherwise fine). My arm really hurt, though, and it turned out that it was broken. The doctor said the break showed that something more was wrong with me, and my family went back home to California so that I could see my regular doctors.

A big reason why we went home was the fact that I'd had cancer once before, when I was little. I don't remember much about it. But the doctors thought there was a chance that I had cancer again, and they turned out to be right. This time, I had cancer in my bone, and right away the doctors made a plan for my treatment. I didn't know what to expect. I was really scared.

The treatment was going to make my immune system weak, so I couldn't risk being exposed to germs. That meant I had to stop going to school. I was in second grade, and being away from my friends was so hard. I hated not being able to see my classmates, doing fun class activities, and going on field trips. Some people might be excited to stop going to school, but you don't appreciate it until you can't go anymore. I started being home-schooled for a few hours each day.

Every three weeks, I'd go into the hospital for treatment. Doctors used a few different kinds of treatment for my illness, and one of them was



I drew pictures to tell the story of my experience.

called *chemotherapy*. Most people usually call it chemo (pronounced KEY-mo), and it's not pleasant. Unlike other medicines, chemo makes you feel worse instead of better, but that's how you know that it's doing its job. I had to stay in the hospital for several days at a time for each chemo treatment. I felt tired and sick to my stomach whenever I was in the hospital, and I didn't eat very much. But my mom was there for almost every second of every hospital stay. She even slept in a chair next to my bed. Knowing she was there



My family was so supportive. Dad and my sister, Sarah, were home when my mom and I were at chemo.

"Not being able to see my friends was tough, but most of them stuck by me as best they could."

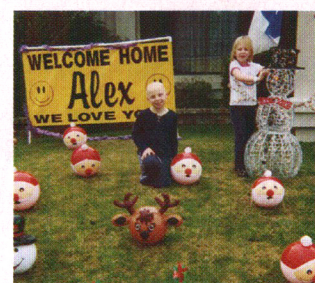


for me made everything a little easier.

A bad side effect of chemo is that you lose your hair. I was really hoping that it wouldn't happen to me, but it did. Big clumps of hair started coming out as I brushed, and eventually I was completely bald. I got lots of hats and a wig. I wore the wig on special occasions when I didn't want people to see that I was bald. The wig was itchy, though, and I didn't like wearing it. I mostly stuck to hats, and I got used to having no hair. Even my

eyebrows and eyelashes fell out. It was weird.

Not being able to see my friends was tough, but most of them stuck by me as best they could. My friend Hannah decorated my yard the first time I came home from the hospital. She made a Welcome Home sign, and later my neighbors



Here we are in our yard after my last chemo session.



"I appreciate my life more,
and I know that I'm lucky
to still be here."

started decorating the yard with themes, such as the holidays and things that I liked. I loved the time that they decorated with things that were pink—pink hearts, pink poodles, you name it. It was so nice of them, and it really helped to lift my spirits.

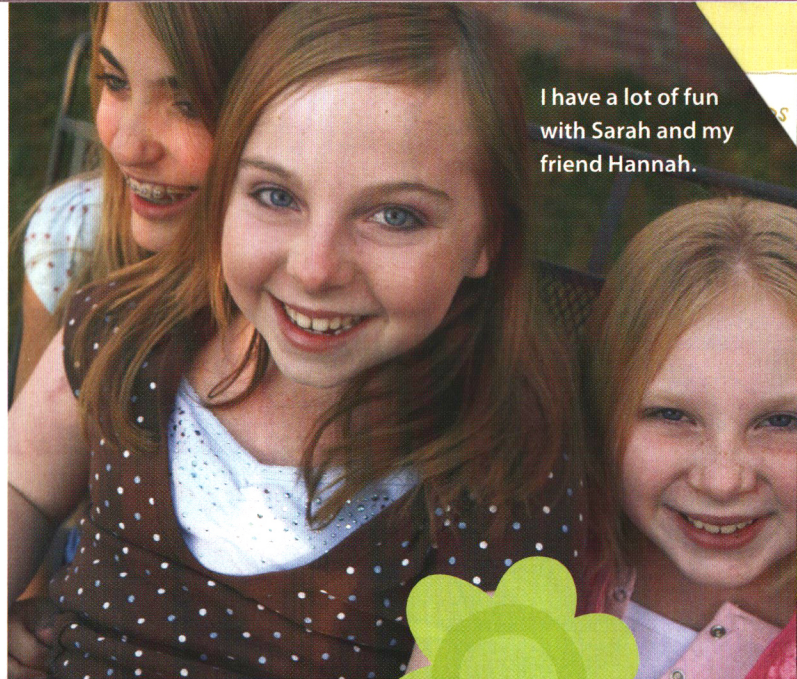
In all, I had 14 sessions of chemo, so the process took almost an entire year. I'll never forget the day I came home from the hospital after my last chemo session. My yard had been decorated for Christmas. I still had no hair, and my body still hurt, but I knew that it was over. Of course, I had to keep going back to the hospital for tons of tests to make sure that my treatment had worked and that my cancer was gone. But in that instant, it felt like the whole ordeal had ended. I felt great.

That was more than three years ago. Today, I have to be careful because my bones are a little weak from the treatment. That means no contact sports, and I have to be careful when I'm playing outside. Also, my right arm is a little bit shorter than my left arm. It'll always be that way because the part of the bone where the cancer had been isn't growing anymore. I don't throw very well anymore with my right arm, and I've become a lefty for some things. But really, that's the only thing that the cancer has changed in my life.

Well, almost the only thing. My outlook on life has changed a lot, too. I appreciate my life more, and I know that I'm lucky to still be here. Obviously, I would not have chosen to have cancer. But now I am able to see the good things that came out of me being sick, such as making new friends and being able to help raise money for cancer research.

I participate in Relay for Life, which is an

annual nationwide event. People all over the country walk laps and raise money through sponsors. The money goes toward research that we hope will lead to a better understanding of cancer—and better ways to fight it. I have walked each year since I got better, and I'm thankful that I have that chance. Raising money is meaningful to me because I know what it's really like to have cancer. I know firsthand how important it is to help other people who get it.



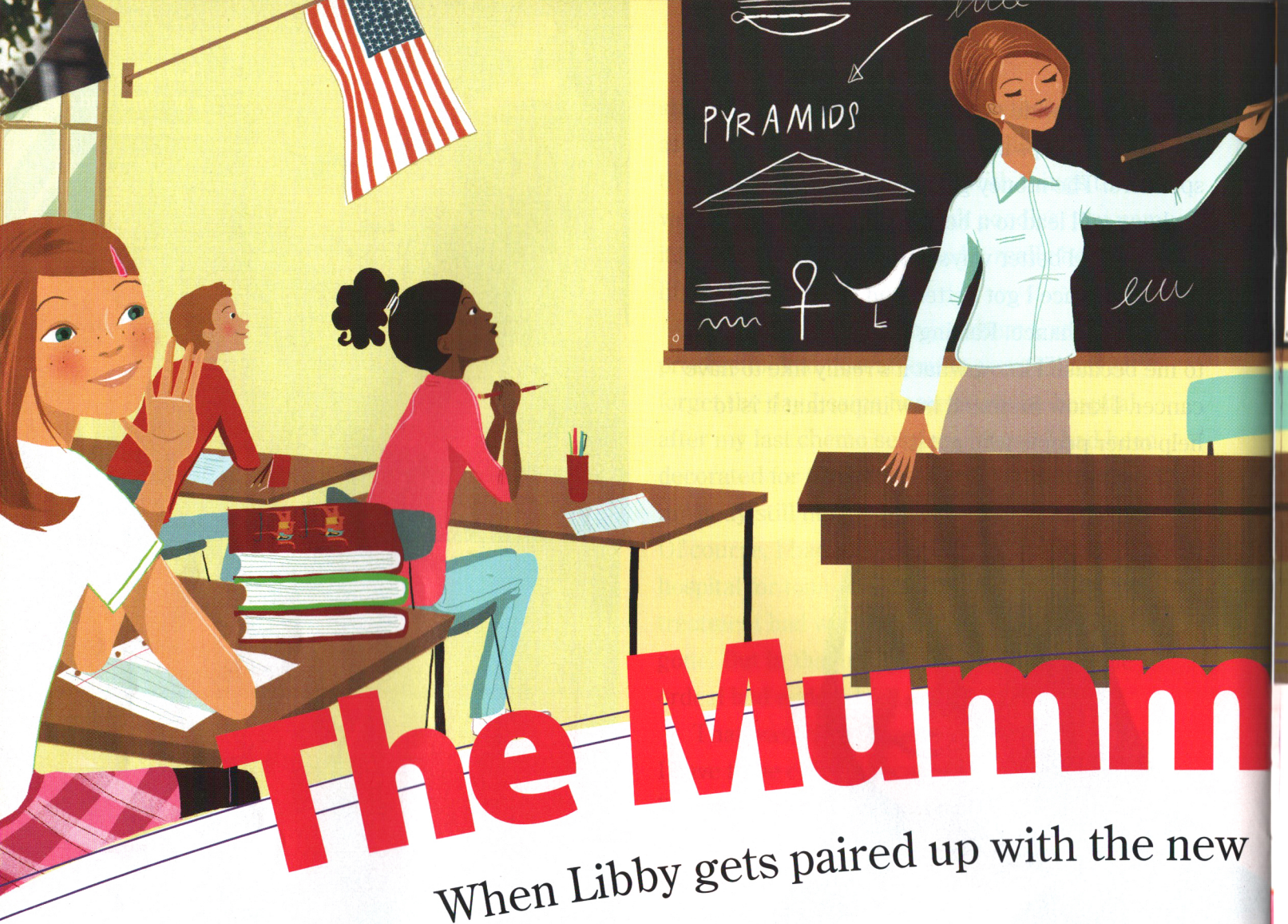
I have a lot of fun with Sarah and my friend Hannah.



"Raising money is meaningful to me because I know what it's really like to have cancer."



I've told my story in front of big crowds of people at Relay for Life events. I don't love to talk about what happened to me, and I usually don't feel like the hero that some people make me out to be. Still, I hope that what I say can inspire more people to help and raise more money. If I can help to make sure that someone else's story has a happy ending like mine, then it's all worth it. ★



When Libby gets paired up with the new

Libby Fitch tried not to look disappointed when her teacher picked Sasha Klopman as her partner for a presentation on ancient Egypt. The last time Mrs. Gonzalez assigned partners, Libby got Aiden Eberly, a kid known for staring into space and losing his place in group reading.

"True, Aiden needs structure," said Mrs. Gonzalez. "But I think he's up to the challenge of working with someone more highly motivated."

"Uh-huh," Libby said. She went on to "motivate" Aiden all the way to an A by doing ninety percent of the work herself.

This time, the way that Mrs. Gonzalez smiled

led Libby to believe that she was being asked to do yet another favor: she was being chosen to draw Sasha Klopman into her own personal spotlight.

For the four weeks that Sasha had been attending Irving Elementary, she had kept almost entirely quiet. Libby, on the other hand, was hardly ever quiet. Her hand was always in the air when Mrs. Gonzalez asked a question. On her last report card, her teacher had written, "Libby is a leader in class participation!"

Libby looked at Sasha and wiggled her fingers hello. Sasha waved silently back. Libby pointed to her watch and mouthed the word, "Lunch?" Sasha nodded quickly, then turned her eyes to the board



y's Secret

girl, things don't turn out as expected.

by Kathleen O'Dell

and blushed. Seemingly frozen, she did not look over at Libby again.

When the lunch bell rang, Libby gathered her pen and a small notepad, stuck them in her lunch bag, and made a beeline for Sasha.

"Let's sit in the corner," she said, leading Sasha along. "We'll take notes while we eat. And I'll give you some information you might need—you know, like my e-mail address and phone number."

Sasha looked a little unsure.

"Over here," Libby gestured. "Have a seat."

"Um, can I get lunch first?" she asked softly.

"Oh!" said Libby. "You didn't bring yours?"

"No," Sasha said.

"Go ahead," said Libby. "I'll get started while you stand in line."

Libby made a business card of sorts on a small piece of paper.

LIBBY FITCH

fitchfam@logon.net • Home phone: 777-8899

We do not answer our phone between 6:30-7:30 because of dinner! I do check my e-mails afterward and also first thing in the morning.

Libby then made a card with fill-in-the-blank spaces for Sasha to fill out.



"Ahem," said Sasha, holding a tray loaded with pizza, fries, and chocolate milk.

Libby looked up distractedly until she figured out there was nowhere for Sasha to put down her lunch tray. Quickly, she cleared a space and handed Sasha her information sheet.

"You go ahead and eat," said Libby. "Pizza's messy. I've got a sandwich and it's much easier for me to take notes at the same time."

"O.K.," Sasha said, obediently biting into her cheese and pepperoni.

"I'm thinking we could do a presentation on Egyptian tombs," Libby said. "I have a bunch of *National Geographics* at my house, and I remember seeing something about King Tut in one of them. I'll check to see if we still have it. Anyway, they had a map of the tomb's layout inside that I could copy."

Sasha opened her mouth to speak.

"And don't worry about supplies or anything like that," said Libby. "I've got the

"I'm thinking we could do a presentation on Egyptian tombs," Libby said.

poster board and a zillion colored pens and all that stuff at home."

"I have things, too," said Sasha, "at my house—"

"We'll get to your part tomorrow in social studies," Libby said. "Mrs. Gonzalez is going to give us time to work together. Right now, let's just figure out what we're doing in general, O.K.?"

Sasha took another nibble of pizza and shrugged while Libby scribbled notes between bites of her tuna sandwich.

The next day, Libby came to class prepared with cutouts from *National Geographic*, printouts from her Internet encyclopedia, and several rolls of white toilet paper.

"I didn't know we were bringing things today," said Sasha.

"Well, I just wanted to show you what I've done so far," said Libby. "It's a partner project, after all." As she emptied her bag, Libby noted a look of embarrassment on Sasha's face. "What's wrong?" she asked.

"The toilet paper," said Sasha. "What's it for?"

Libby smiled. "This?" she said, holding up a roll. "This is for you."

"Yeah?" Sasha said doubtfully.

"Not to use," Libby assured her. "To WEAR! You're the mummy."

Sasha was silent.

"Don't worry," said Libby. "This is going to be the easiest thing in the world for you. I'll bring the poster boards, and you can be the Mummy Presenter who points to the pictures while I explain them. Just be careful when you wrap this around yourself to leave some eyeholes so that you don't bump into things."

"And a hole for the mouth too, right?" said Sasha.

"If you want," said Libby, patting Sasha on the shoulder.

"Is that all?" Sasha asked.

"You want more?" Libby checked her notes. "You could make the sarcophagus if you want. That would be a big help."

"O.K.," said Sasha.

"But you'll need to get a box big enough to fit into," Libby warned her. "See me tomorrow and I'll give you the address to the Discount Appliance



Warehouse. They'll have something left over, I'm sure. Just make sure you color over any advertising. Because I don't think they had refrigerators in ancient Egypt."

Libby couldn't be sure, but as she walked away, she thought she might have heard Sasha sigh.

For the next several nights, Libby laid out her project materials on the floor of her room, puzzling over the best way to order her facts and statistics.

"It's looking good," said Libby's mom as she passed through.

"Well, it'd better," said Libby. "I'm working for two again." She put down her scissors and crossed her arms. "Can you believe that my partner has never e-mailed me even once since we started? She's beyond shy, you know. And I've made everything so simple, too, just for her. She doesn't even need to talk in front of the class."

"Who is this again?" asked her mother.

"Sasha Klopman. She's new."

"Poor girl. It's difficult, switching schools in the middle of the year. Where's she from?"

Libby paused. "Oregon, maybe?"

"Does she miss it?"

"She never said she does," Libby answered. "I try to get her to talk, but she hangs back. It's like Aiden Eberly all over again."

Mrs. Fitch knelt down, picked up a piece of poster board, and examined it. "Hmmm," she said. "Have you ever thought that maybe you haven't left her enough to do?"

"No," said Libby. "It's not like that. She's the mummy. It's almost like she's the star of the show when you think about it. And I put her in charge of the sarcophagus. But I'm not going to call her and ask her about it because I've got plenty of things to do myself."

"You have all weekend left," Mrs. Fitch said.

"I'm sure your friend will come through."

"Let's hope," said Libby, resuming her gluing.



On Monday morning, more kids than usual got rides from home. Students were unloading pyramid models and boards printed with hieroglyphics and stuffed animals dressed up like the sun god, Ra.

The competition was stiff, Libby noted. She shaded her eyes, looking for Sasha. Nothing. Maybe she was already in the classroom. Libby rushed to find Room Six full of students and began to seriously worry when she found Sasha's desk empty.

"Sasha's the mummy. It's almost like she's the star of the show."

Libby interrupted Paige Schuster, who was still coloring some of her drawings in a mad rush. "Have you seen Sasha?" she asked.

"Nope," Paige answered, not looking up.

Libby studied Carter Blum with envy. Not only did his partner show up, but both boys were ultra-prepared, quizzing each other with stacks of note cards. "Carter," she asked, "have you seen Sasha Klopman around yet?"

"Don't think so," he said. "But then, I haven't seen Mrs. Gonzalez this morning either."

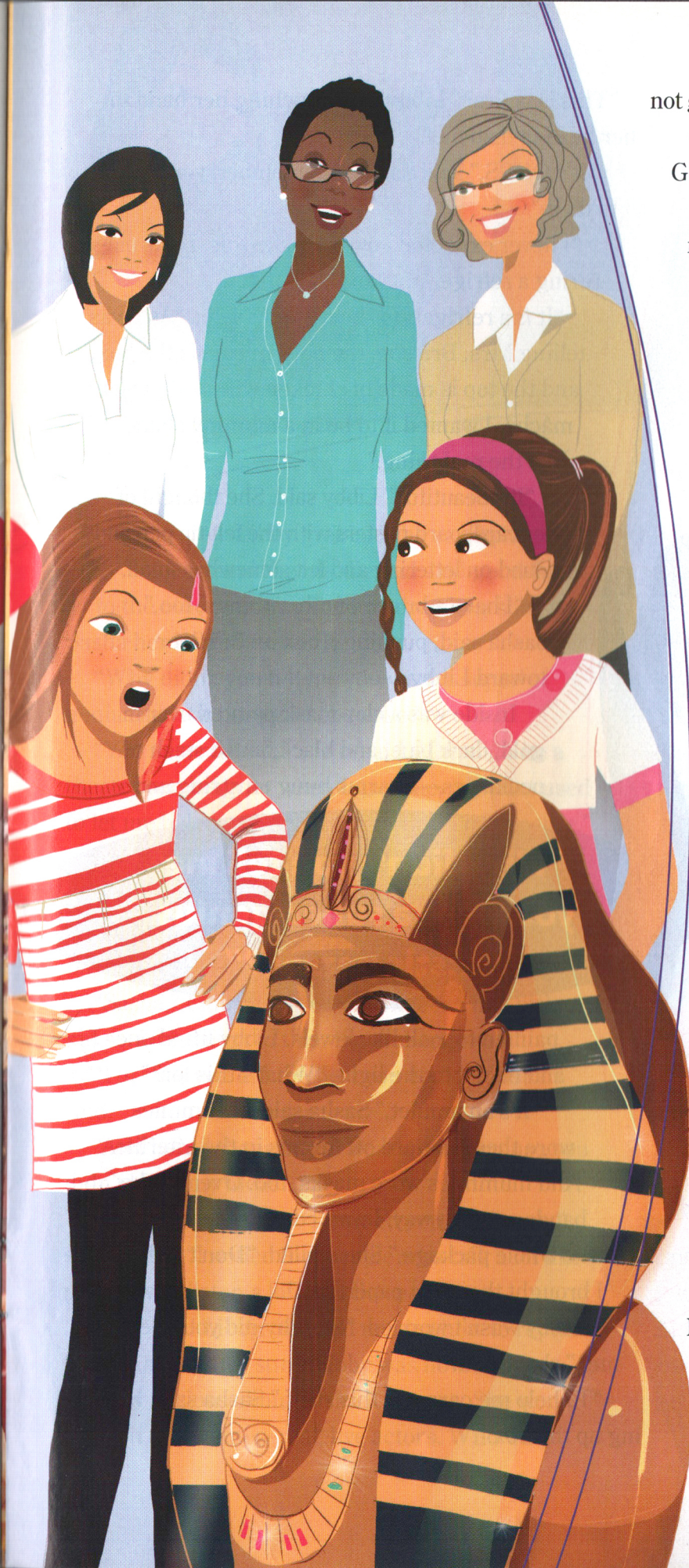
The classroom buzzed without Mrs. Gonzalez present. By the time the class bell sounded, the buzzing had turned into a roar.

"Libby Fitch," crackled the intercom. "Could you come to the office, please?"

"Oh, no," said Libby.

"What?" asked Carter. "Are you in trouble?"

"Me?" Libby said. "I don't think so." But she could feel butterflies in her stomach. This was a very important morning and things were definitely



not going as planned.

On the way to the office, Libby passed Mrs. Gonzalez in the hall.

"Ah, Libby, there you are!" she said. "Sasha needs some help with your project. I was going to assist her, but I got tied up in a parent meeting and now I'm late. You'll give her a hand, won't you?"

"Sure," said Libby. "I'm on my way."

Meanwhile she silently grumbled. *This is not fair! I don't care who Mrs. Gonzalez picks for me. I'm never going to work with people who don't pull their own weight! Never, ever, ever again...*

Through the office door, Libby spotted Sasha surrounded by the school secretary, the school nurse, and ... the principal? Everyone was chattering. Libby stopped outside, marveling at the talkative Sasha Klopman who stood before her.

"I worked on it at night," said Sasha to Mrs. Briscoe, the principal, "and on the weekends. I'm new here, so it's not like I have a lot to do when school is out."

"But this is extraordinary," said Mrs. Briscoe. "You did this all by yourself?"

"This part of the project, yes," said Sasha. "I did it alone."

"You did what alone?" Libby asked, a little louder than she had planned.

"Libby!" Sasha exclaimed. Then, turning to Mrs. Briscoe she said, "This is my partner, Libby Fitch."

Libby was about to say, "She knows who I am!" when she noticed, propped against the corner wall, the most intricately decorated, glossy, and realistic mummy sarcophagus she had ever laid eyes on.



"This is yours?" Libby said, touching her hand to her head in disbelief.

"It's OURS," said Sasha. "Remember, you told me to do it."

"I never expected anything like this. I was picturing a refrigerator box."

"It is a refrigerator box," said Sasha. "As I was telling Mrs. Briscoe, the bottom part is the box, and the top is made of chicken wire and papier mâché. I wanted it to be in a mummy shape like the real thing."

"It's beautiful," Libby said. She thought of her cardboard posters with the felt-tip pen and glued-on lettering and felt somewhat small.

"I have a bunch of other things, too," Sasha said, pushing a box on the floor toward Libby.

Inside was a clay mask painted over in gold, dark blue, and black, and a stack of necklaces—charms hung on string and

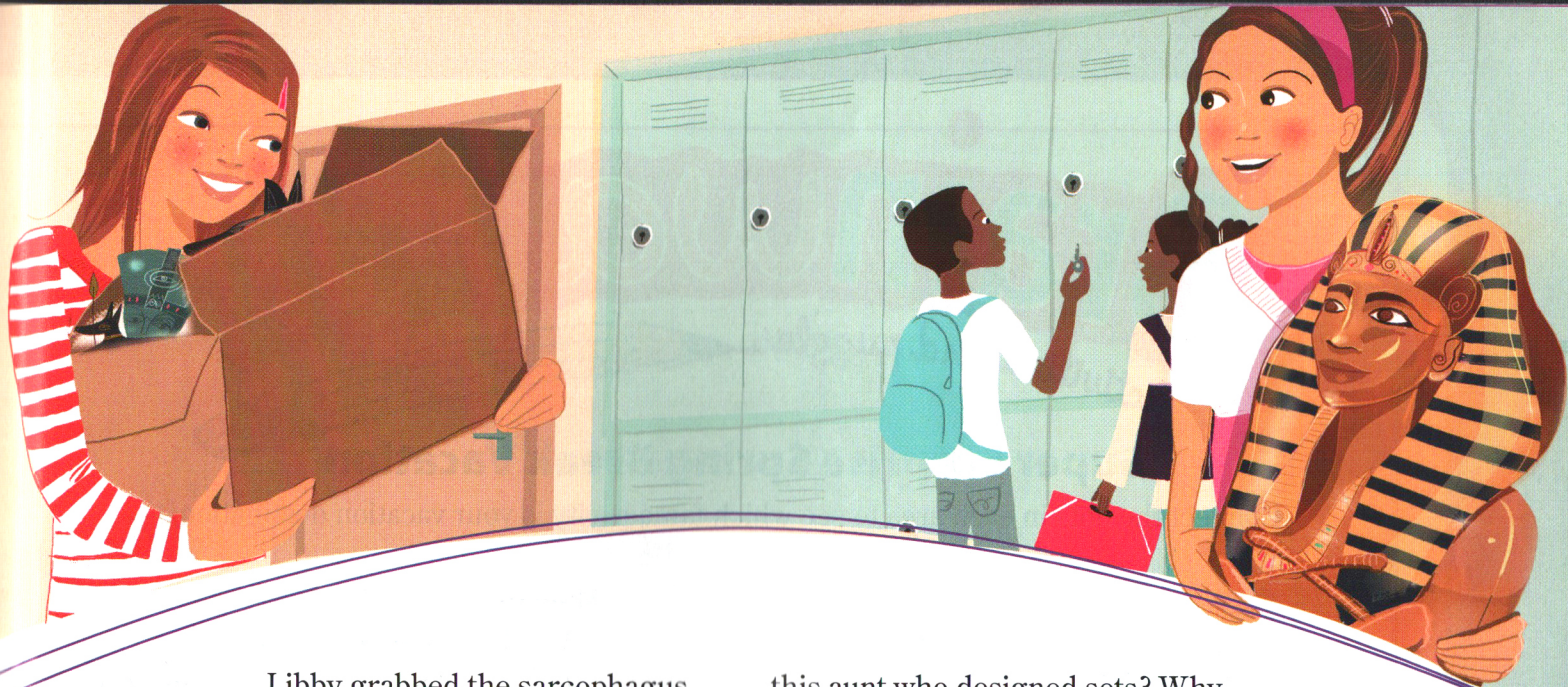
"Why didn't you tell me you were a super-genius artistic person?"

painted to look like jewels. Libby lifted one and held it to the light. "What's this for?"

"It's an amulet," Sasha said. "Mummies wore them to ward off threats in the afterlife. And mummies wore masks, too. Over all the bandages. Anyway, I wanted my mummy to have the whole package." She smiled. "Don't worry. I brought the toilet paper, too."

Libby wasn't worried. "So, why did you need me?" she asked.

"To help me carry all this stuff," Sasha said, hoisting up the box.



Libby grabbed the sarcophagus around the middle and said good-bye to the office people. She was dreading showing Sasha her half of the work.

"Why didn't you tell me you were a super-genius artistic person?" she asked.

"You never asked," Sasha said. "I want to be a theater set designer when I grow up. My aunt used to let me help her paint backdrops back in Seattle."

Seattle. Libby made a mental note of that. "You worked in a real theater?"

"Yep, and I painted for Shakespeare and *The Importance of Being Earnest* and everything."

"Sasha," Libby said, "my work looks like little kid scribbles next to this. I'm embarrassed."

"I'm sure you did the best you could," Sasha said.

"And here I thought you were quiet because you didn't have any ideas..."

"I was quiet because I wanted you to like me," said Sasha. "I notice that people who talk a lot like people who listen a lot. So I listened."

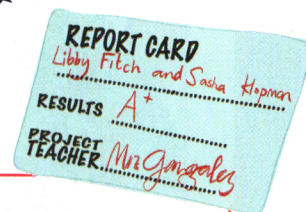
"Oh," said Libby. She had no idea how to reply. One thing was for sure: Libby was now extraordinarily curious about Sasha Klopman. She wondered if Sasha knew real, live actors. Who was

this aunt who designed sets? Why did the Klopmans move from Seattle?

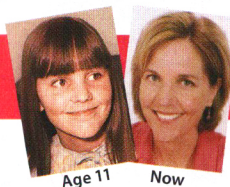
"Sasha," said Libby, "would you like to have lunch with me today?"

"Thanks!" said Sasha. "I'd love to."

Libby was about to suggest that they eat outside on the lunch benches because that's the best way to get first in line at the four square and handball courts, and that she'd save Sasha a seat while Sasha got lunch in the cafeteria... but then she decided not to make any plans. Today, it was Libby Fitch's turn to listen for a while. ★



Meet the Author



Kathleen O'Dell

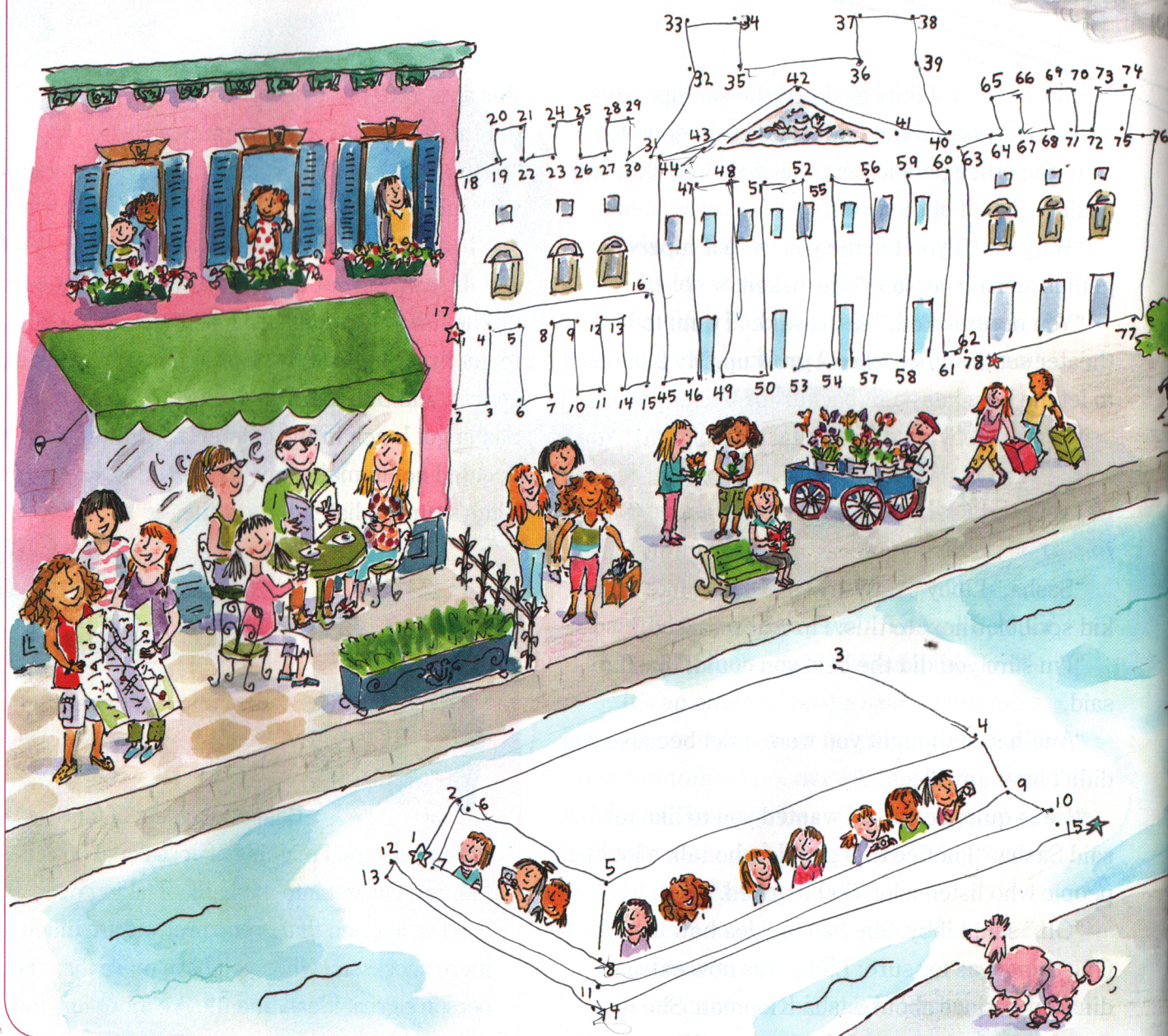
Being the oldest of four brothers and sisters, I'm guilty of occasional bossiness. I know I can get into the habit of taking over. But I've learned that group projects are much more successful when you have more than one person's great ideas, and they're more fun, too.

Brainwaves

activities and puzzles

Super Surprise Spring Break Vacation

Connect the dots in each area to see which famous city is your vacation destination.





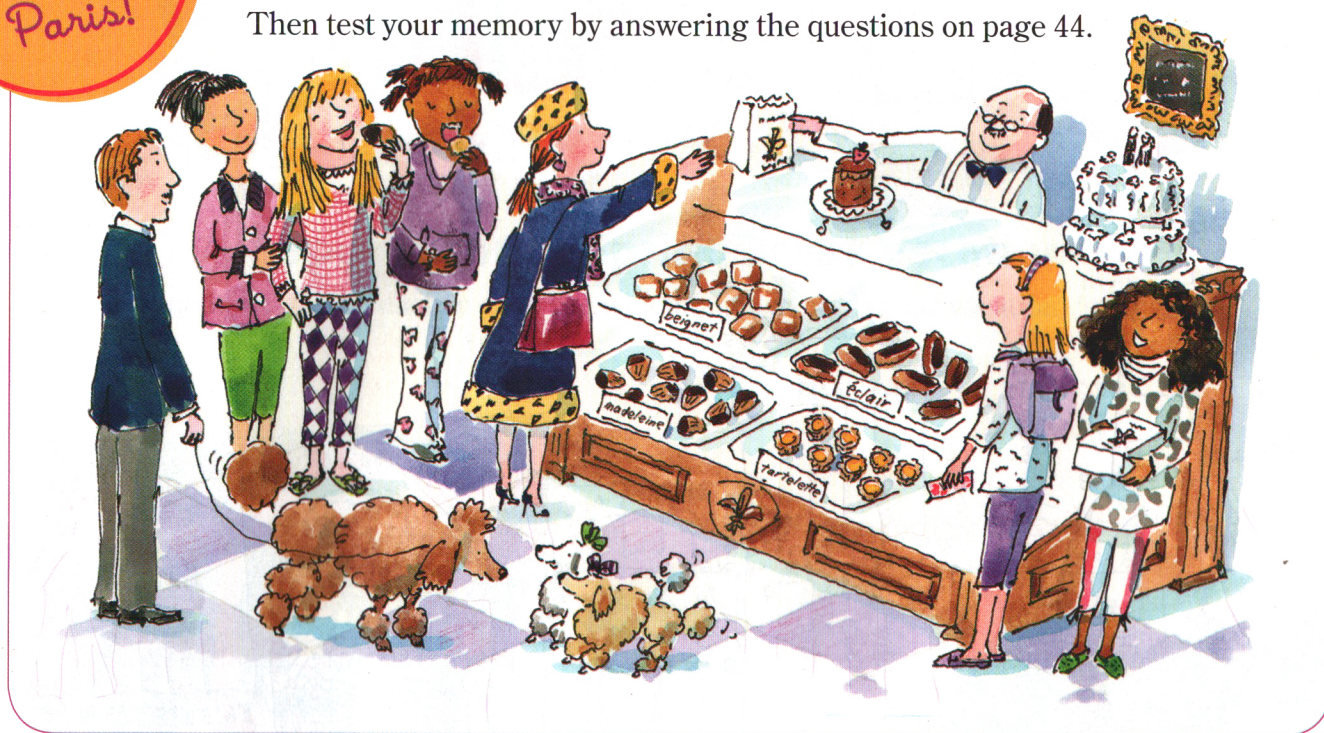
Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Bonjour!
Welcome to
Paris!

Pastry Play

Study this bakery scene for one minute.

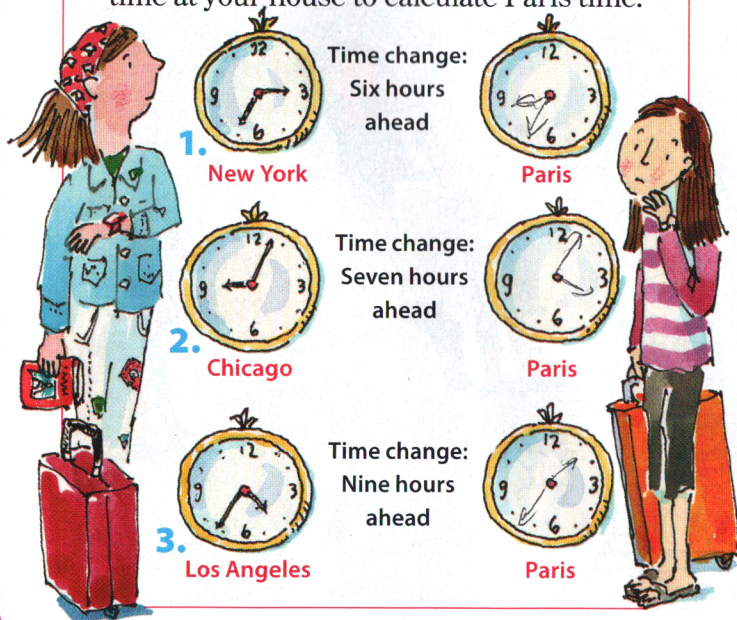
Then test your memory by answering the questions on page 44.



Travel Time

"Excusez-moi—do you have the time?"

Your watch is still set to the time at home, but don't panic. Add the time change to the time at your house to calculate Paris time.



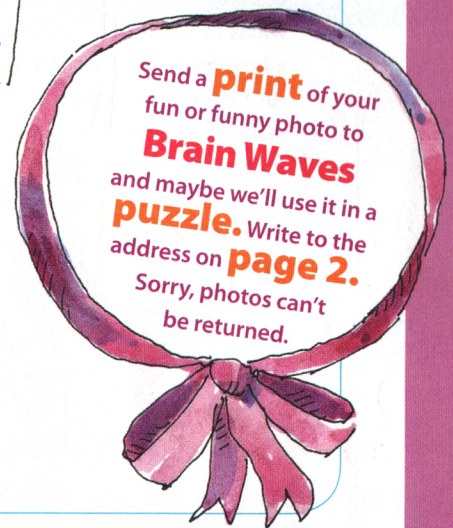
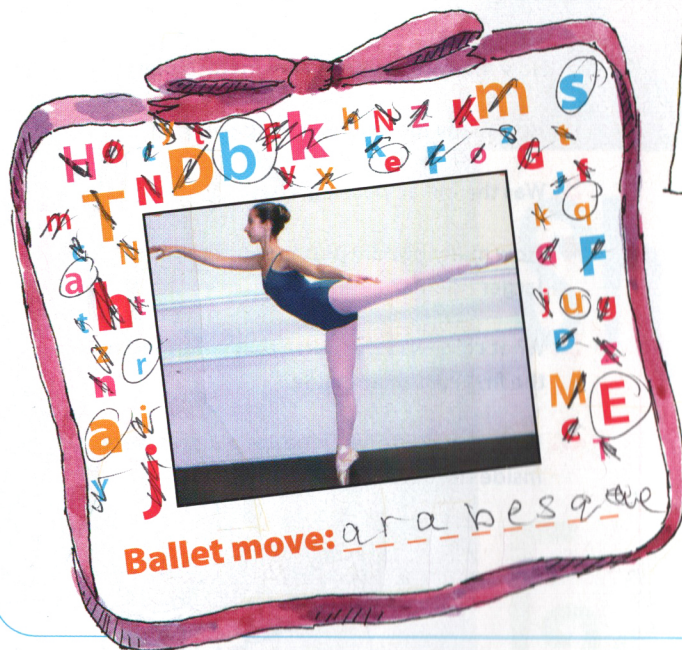
Scarf Scramble

Can you find two scarves of the same print on these French poodles?



Photo Fun

Shanah S. of California loves ballet. To find the name of the step that Shanah is performing, cross off any letter you see on the frame that appears in the list below. Some letters will repeat. Fill in the blanks with the leftover letters, reading from left to right.



Laffateria

Why did the potato go to France?

Because he wanted to be a French fry!

Sara V.
Age 10, Canada

What did the outlet bring on his trip to Paris?

Pluggage.

Chaviva E.
Age 13, Israel

What kind of French food does a frog like best?

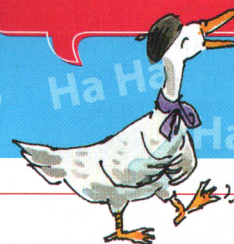
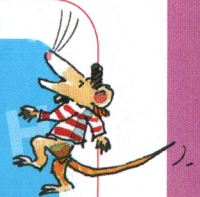
French flies!

Madison S.
Age 11, Iowa

Two croissants were baking in an oven. One croissant said, 'Man, it's hot in here.' The other one said, 'Wow, a talking croissant!'

Jenna M.
Age 12, Illinois

Funny Business
Send your best joke to Brain Waves! Write to the address on page 2. Include your name, birth date, school photo, and signature.



Beret Relay

Try this clothing challenge!

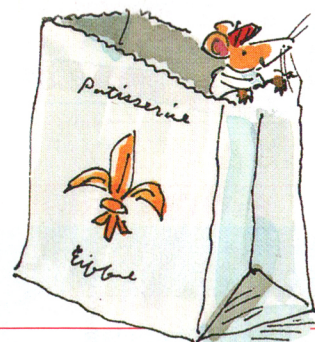
Fill two bags with an equal number of items for a trip to Paris, including a long jacket, a scarf, sunglasses, and a beret or other stylish hat. Line up two teams next to each other. On "Go!," the first player from each team unpacks the bag, puts on the outfit, walks to the center of the room, and strikes a fashion-show pose. Then she runs back to her team, repacks the bag, and passes it to the next player. The first team to finish wins!



Pastry Play

Remember the bakery scene on page 42? Answer these questions about what you saw.

1. How many customers were in the bakery?
2. How many men were in the bakery?
3. Was the baker wearing a hat?
4. How many poodle puppies greeted the larger poodle?
5. What color was the purse that belonged to the first customer in line?
6. How many different kinds of pastries were inside the case?



Answers

Girls Express

The buzzword, foibles, is on page 10.

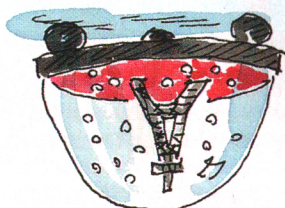


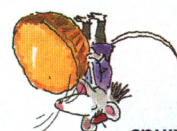
Photo Fun
Answer: arabesque, which in French means "an intricate or elaborate pattern or design."



Scarf Scramble



Travel Time



6. four different kinds
3. no; 4. two puppies; 5. purple;
1. seven customers; 2. two men;

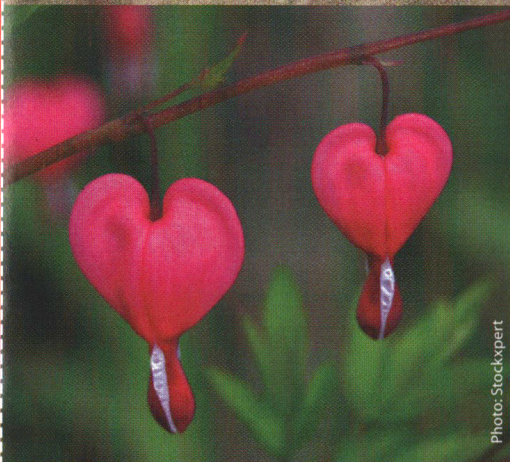
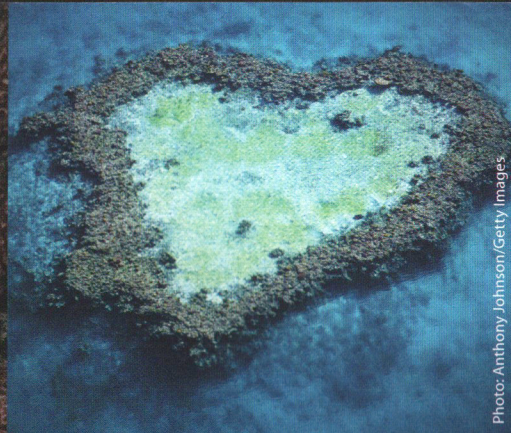
Pastry Play


When all four dot-to-dots are finished, a Paris scene is revealed. You see a tour boat, some buildings, and the Eiffel Tower in the center.

Dot-to-Dots

Au revoir!

Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters. ★



Show
the
Earth
some
Love! 



**You otter be
kind to animals.**



Photo: Kevin Schafer/Getty Images



HELP!

Dear American Girl,

Whenever my class goes on a field trip, my mom always wants to go. I really don't want her to, because I'm afraid she will embarrass me. Help!

Embarrassed

It's not fair for you to be embarrassed before your mom has even done anything wrong. So try to relax and not worry about what she *might* say or do. Talk to your mom if you're feeling nervous or if there's a class bully you're especially worried about. And keep in mind that what your classmates will probably notice about your mom is that she cares enough to help them have a good trip.



Dear American Girl,

I have this friend, and when she's at my house she is super nice and funny. But the next day, she is really mean to me at school. I try to be nice, but she is still mean!

Good Friend or bad

You already know the truth—a good friend doesn't turn her



friendship on and off like a light switch. Tell this girl that you don't like how she's treating you. Give her a chance to apologize. But if she doesn't change, it may be time to see her less and look for friends who are always glad to see you.



Dear American Girl,

I read my sister's diary! But not on purpose. I thought it was a notebook, but it was where she kept her crushes, secrets, and personal stuff. Now I feel guilty. Can you help me?

Diary Peeker

Finding your sister's diary may have been an accident—but reading it wasn't. You can't change what you've done, but you can promise yourself that you will do better in

the future. If you still feel guilty and it's affecting your relationship with your sister, you might want to tell her what you did to get it off your chest. But whether you confess or not, you need to respect her privacy from now on.



Dear American Girl,

I'm going to be in a program for talented students. I'm afraid that I'll sound like I'm bragging if I discuss this program with my friends who aren't in it. How do I avoid being a show-off?

Genius Girl

It's fine to discuss this program with your friends, but don't always be the one to bring it up first, especially if they feel bad that they're not in it. Focus on what you like about the work—you don't need to point out that the class is more advanced. Everyone is skilled in different ways—be sure to ask your friends about the things they're good at, too. And remember that you can always share your excitement about the program with other kids who are in the program.

MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I love to read, but whenever I sit down with a good book, my little sister complains that I never play with her. I feel bad when she says that, but I'm always in the mood to read.

Radical Reader

Start a book club for just the two of you, and invite your sister to join. Set up a comfy reading spot in your room. Make the meetings fun—maybe you can both wear crazy socks or set up stuffed animals to read to. If your sister is too little to read by herself, start reading a longer chapter book to her that you'll both enjoy. You don't have to entertain her all the time, but if she knows she gets to spend some time with you, she'll be more likely to let you have some time to yourself.



Dear American Girl,

All of my friends gossip! I've heard them talk about everything other people do. It hurts because I know they gossip about me, too. I need help!

Confused



Good for you for trying to stop the gossip—you deserve respect, and so do the other girls. When your friends start gossiping, don't join in. Say something like "Oh" or "Yeah, anyway," in a bored tone, and then change the subject. You're probably not the only one unhappy about all the backstabbing, so if you resist, others probably will, too. And if the gossip gets out of hand or becomes very hurtful, talk to a parent or teacher about it.



Dear American Girl,

The kid who sits next to me in math class is always looking at my answers. I don't want to tell on him because he is really nice. What should I do?

Stuck with a cheater

Be careful. Are you sure this boy is cheating? Try covering your paper or moving so that he can't see. If that doesn't work, talk to him before you tell the teacher. Say, "I saw you looking at my paper. Please stop doing that." If he continues sneaking peeks at your work, say, "I asked you not to look at my answers. If you don't stop, I'll have to tell the teacher." That should get the message across. And if he keeps cheating? You can tell the teacher, knowing you gave him a chance to stop.



Advice from You

"My dad's saying is: Laugh with your friends, not at them. Because that way, you won't hurt someone's feelings."

Miranda F.

Age 10, Minnesota

Need advice? Got advice? Write: Help!

American Girl magazine

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Go to "Fun for Girls" at americangirl.com to see more great Dream Machines like this one made by Alexa E.

Sisters Kate and Kayla found 17 four-leaf clovers when they were playing outside at their grandparents' house—that's one lucky backyard!



Behind the Scenes

Look at all the "green" we found while making this issue!



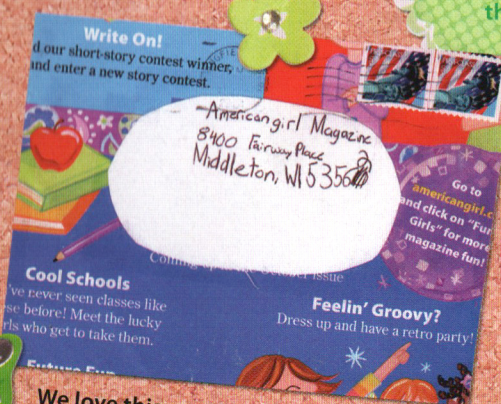
If you do, donate an old pair to

someone in need. Ask your eye doctor how.




Help the Earth

by cleaning up your room! After reading "Clutter Control" starting on page 16, sell old toys or clothes that you don't need anymore at a yard sale. Donate the money you earn to an Earth-friendly charity.



We love this envelope Madison T. from Massachusetts sent to us! You can recycle, too, by turning an old magazine or catalogue page into an envelope.

Send your recycled craft ideas to the address on page 2.



It's Our All-Animal Issue!
From soft and fluffy to wild and woolly,
animals will be on every page.

Goofy Grins
See the funny photos girls sent
in to our "Pet Smiles" contest!

American Girl

Coming up in the May/June issue

For more
magazine fun, go to
americangirl.com
and click on
"Fun for Girls."

Animal Stories
Read the winners of
our short-story contest.

Care and Share
Meet girls who are saving animals,
and learn how you can help, too.

Bow WOW
Make fun animal crafts you'll love!

☆ American Girl®

Here are small ways that you can help the environment, whether you are at school, at home, or outside. Try to complete one of these challenges every day!

- 🦋 I took a shower in less than five minutes.
- ☀️ I unplugged something in my room that I don't use very often.
- 🦉 I folded my jeans neatly and put them away so that I can wear them again.
- 🐸 I shut off the TV or computer when I was done using it.
- 🐞 I carried my lunch to school in a reusable bag.
- 🐸 I didn't blast the heat or air conditioning in the car.
- 🌸 I made labels for the recycling bins in my home and at school.
- 🌿 I asked an adult to help me safely dispose of old batteries.
- 🐸 I saved paper by sending an e-card.
- 🌿 I put water in a reusable bottle.
- 💧 I used paper towel sparingly or used a cloth towel instead.
- 🌿 I re-used a paper or plastic bag today.
- 🌿 I started a "green" club at my school to help the environment.
- 🌿 I used both sides of a sheet of paper.
- 🌿 I walked somewhere instead of being driven.
- 🌿 When I bought something at a store, I didn't take a plastic bag.
- 🦋 I hung up my bath towel so that I can use it again.
- 🌿 I shut off all the lights when I left a room.
- 🦋 I unplugged something when I was done using it.
- 🐸 I didn't use a blow-dryer today.
- 🌿 I put large reusable bags in my family's car for shopping trips.
- 🐸 I shut off the water while I was brushing my teeth.
- 🐧 I planted a tree or a flower.
- 🌿 I donated old toys and clothes that I don't need anymore.
- 🐸 I had a picnic outside today but didn't leave any garbage behind.
- 🐸 I am taking good care of my school supplies so that I don't have to buy new ones next year.

Earth Day Challenges